北条司

ニッキー・ラーセン、誕生！！

これは、ある同一人物の名前だ。世界各国で出版または放映されたC・H（エンジェル・ハート）の一例である。ニッキーはフランス、猛龍は中国（これは海賊版の後の名前）。正は韓国（ハングルなだけで多分、「りょう」と読むのだろう）。海賊版まであわせると二体何カ国で、遼がその全ての名前で何と呼ばれているのか、作者も把握できない。今以前より海賊版は減り、ライセンス契約も多くなっているから大体「呼び捨て」に統一されていると思うのだが――。

アートディレクター　福田界一
カバーデザイン　田辺雅太郎

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18

Angel Heart

天使之心

北条司

Tsukasa Hojo

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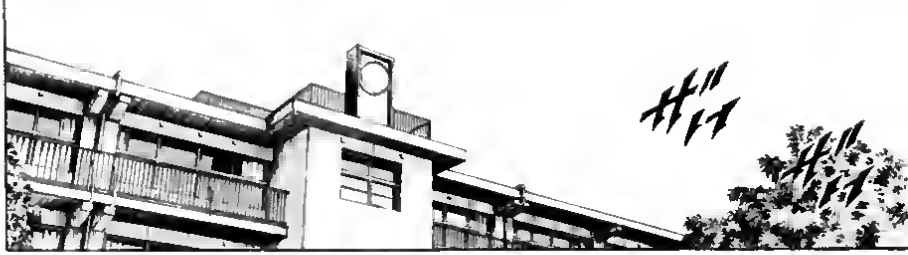
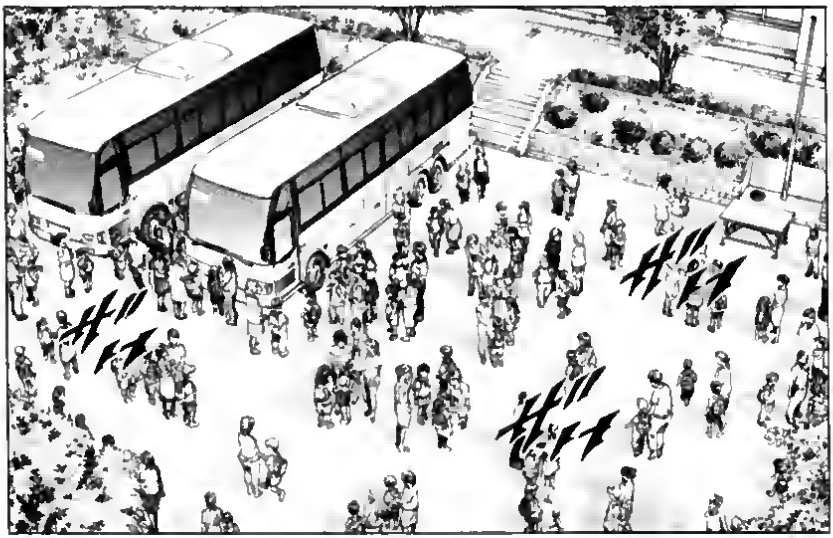
Chapter 188 Let's go to the Beach!





...

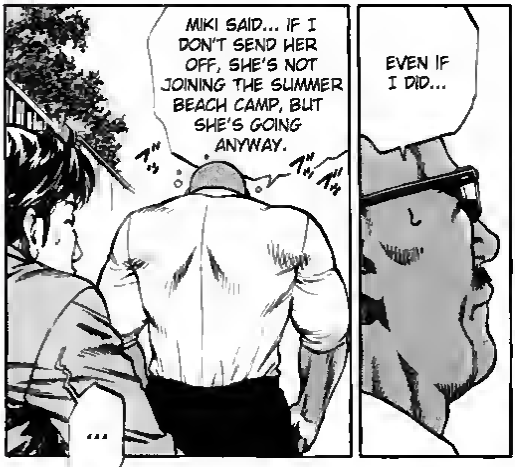
FALCON... WOULDN'T COME SEE ME OFF ..

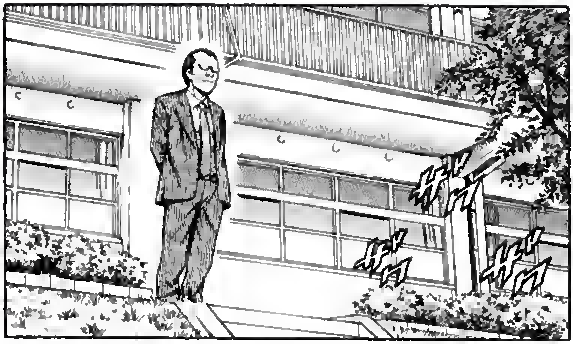
NO WAY... DIDN'T HE SAY HE'LL TURN UP LATER?
IF HE WAS COMING, HE SHOULD'VE LEFT WITH US.
WASN'T HE IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING WHEN YOU WERE LEAVING?
THAT'S AN EXCUSE!
I...
DON'T THINK I'M GOING FOR THE CAMP...
JUST WAIT A BIT! I'M SURE HE'LL COME!
...
...
GEEZ, SO SLOW! WHAT'S UMIBOUZU DOING?
...
IO IO IO

IF SOMEONE SAW, THEY'D DEFINITELY THINK YOU'RE A PERVERT...

DO YOU PLAN TO SEE HER OFF FROM THERE?
RYO!

...
ズル ズル...
ズ...


MIKI SAID... IF I DON'T SEND HER OFF, SHE'S NOT JOINING THE SUMMER BEACH CAMP, BUT SHE'S GOING ANYWAY.
...
EVEN IF I DID...
I KNOW ...
DON'T JUST STAND THERE HESITATING, HURRY UP AND GO... MIKI'S WAITING FOR YOU.



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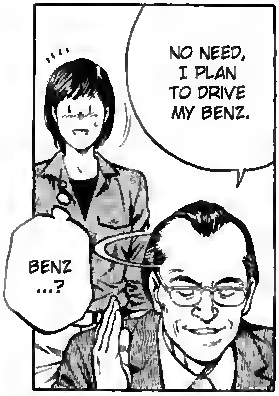
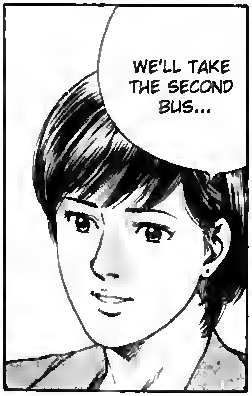
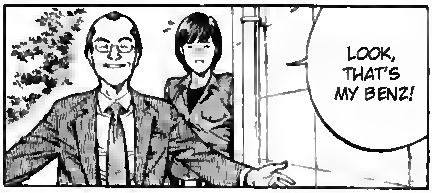
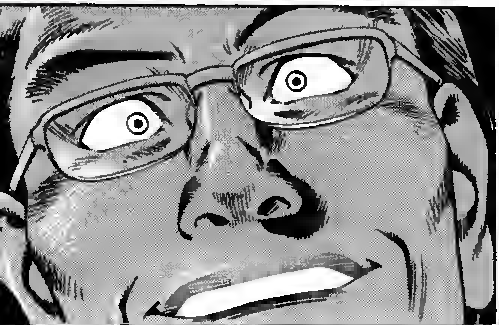
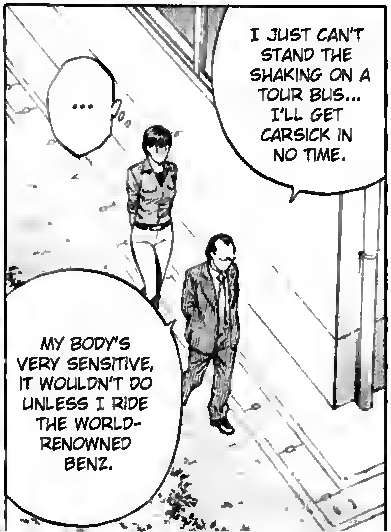

NO NEED, I PLAN TO DRIVE MY BENZ.
BENZ …?

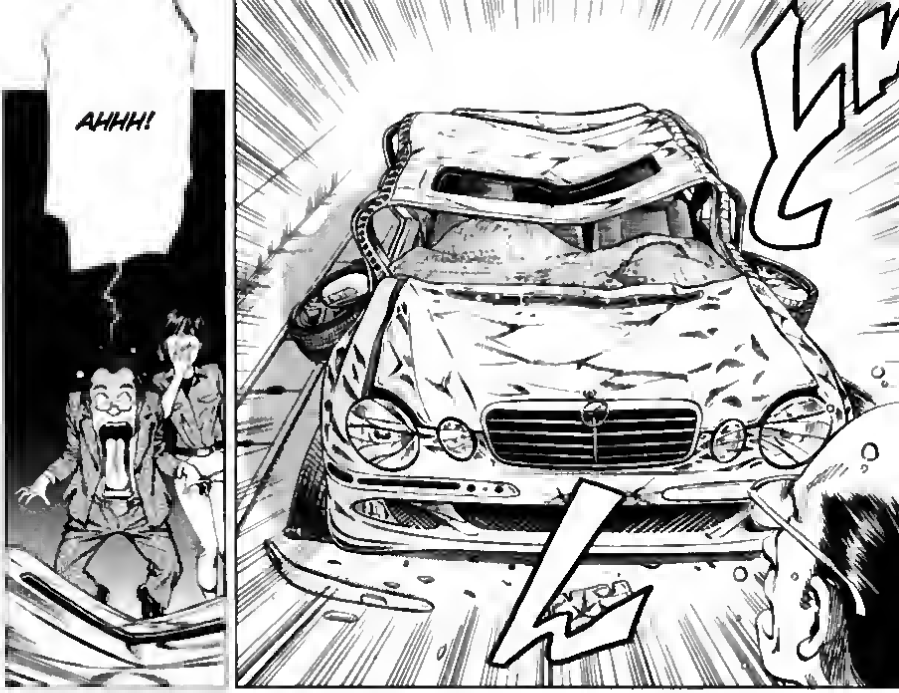

WE'LL TAKE THE SECOND BUS…

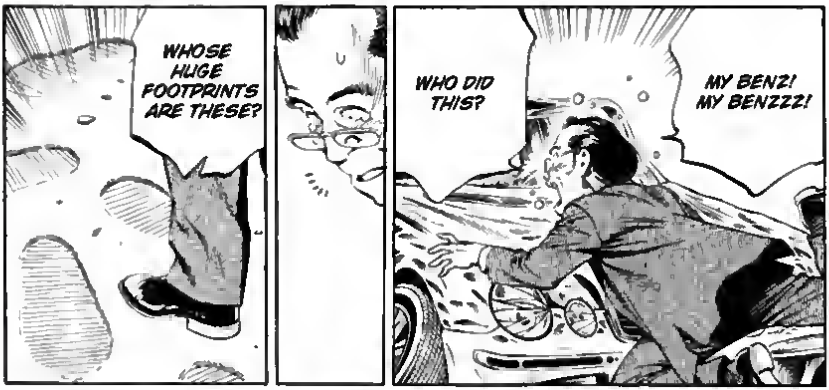
MMM …
VICE PRINCIPAL, THIRTY MINUTES TO DEPARTURE.


LOOK, THAT'S MY BENZ!




…
I JUST CAN'T STAND THE SHAKING ON A TOUR BUS… I'LL GET CARSICK IN NO TIME.
MY BODY'S VERY SENSITIVE, IT WOULDN'T DO UNLESS I RIDE THE WORLD-RENOWNED BENZ.


AHHH!


WHOSE HUGE FOOTPRINTS ARE THESE?
WHO DID THIS?
MY BENZ! MY BENZZZ!

DON'T TELL ME... IT'S HIM...

IT WAS DEFINITELY YOU PEOPLE! YES! MUST'VE BEEN! WHERE'S THAT BALD GUY?
SIR! PLEASE CALM DOWN!
I'VE STILL GOT 20 YEARS OF LOAN RE-PAYMENTS LEFT!
TOTALLY SMASHING MY BENZ!
THIS IS TOO MUCH!
...?
Bend's?
HE'S THE CULPRIT! YOU MUST PAY! YOU MUST TRANSFER! I MUST CALL THE POLICE!
HE MUST BE TAKING REVENGE ON ME FOR CALLING HIM A PERVERT!
CALM DOWN! DON'T ACCUSE OTHERS SO HASTILY...
IS HE NOT HERE? I'M GONNA SEND HIM TO THE STATION!
FALCON!

WERE YOU LOOKING FOR ME?
EHH...
SEEMS LIKE WE HAVE A MISUNDER-STANDING. I WON'T RUN, LET'S TALK IT OUT!
AND THEN CHASE YOU OUT OF SCHOOL!
DARN! YOU BALDY, I'LL DIG OUT THE EVIDENCE OF YOU RUINING MY CAR!
ER... AH...
MUST BE MY MISTAKE, HAHAHA!
NO... NOTHING!
...?
WHASSUP? WHAT'S ALL THE NOISE?

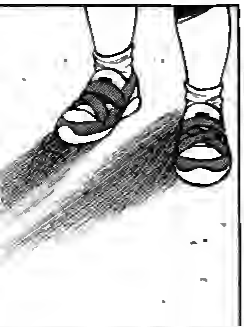
DON'T KNOW... Something about bends...
Bends?
WHAT'D THAT MONKEY DUDE SAY?
AH, RYO-PAPA.
...
LET'S HAVE A FUN SUMMER BEACH CAMP!
THE NEXT TWO DAYS WILL BE YOUR FIRST SCHOOL TRIP.
EVERYONE, WE'LL SET OFF NOW!

YOU CAN SIT BESIDE YOUR BEST BUDDIES. WOULDN'T IT BE MORE INTERESTING THAT WAY?
LET'S DECIDE THE SEATING!
PAIR UP WITH THE PERSON YOU WANT TO SIT WITH!
WAH!
GREAT!
WHAT'S WRONG? I THINK THE CHILDREN ARE VERY HAPPY.
VICE PRINCIPAL ... THIS ...
YAY!
WAH!

IS HE DOING THIS ON PURPOSE?

...
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ

...



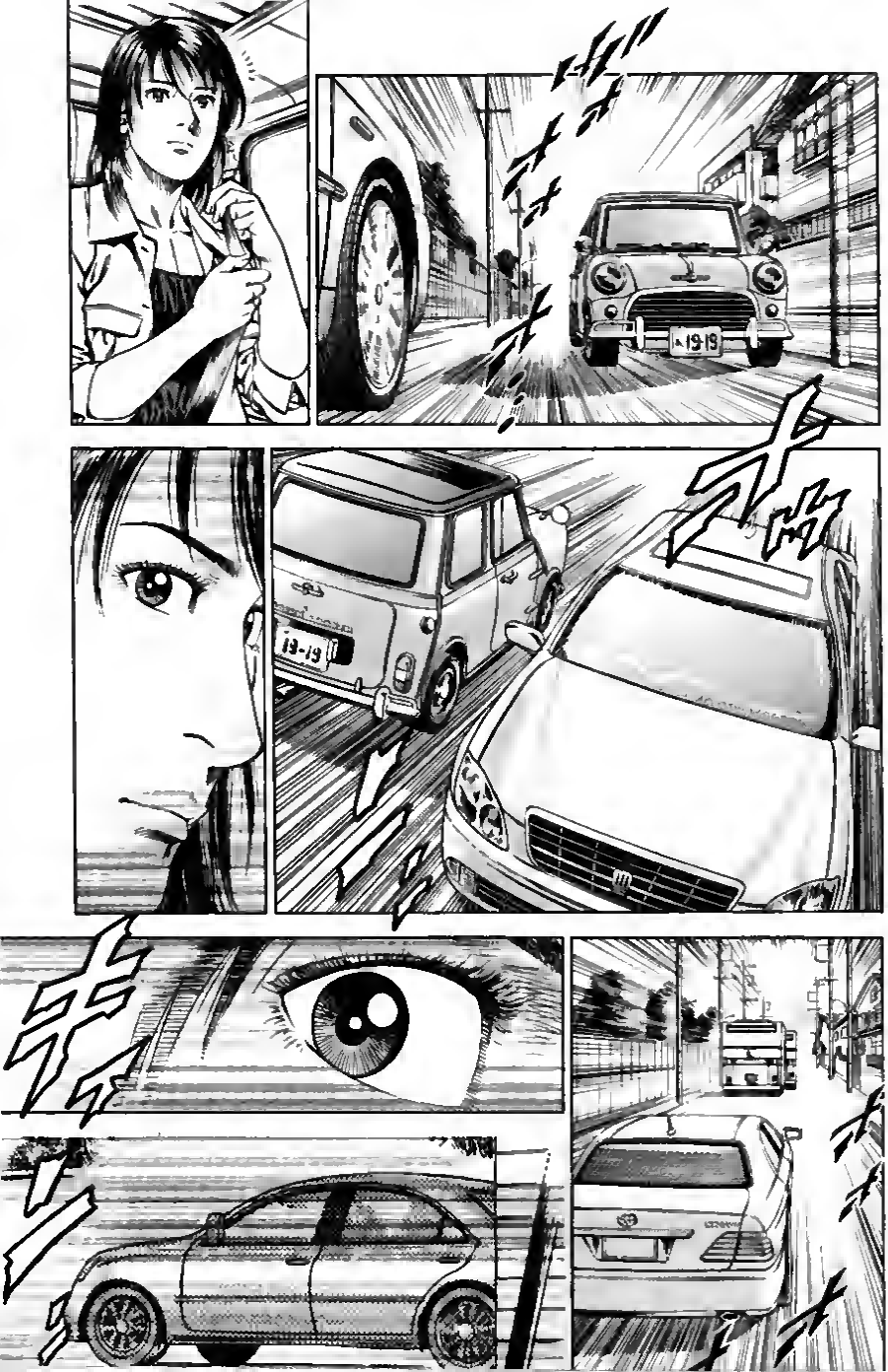
CAN I CRUSH THAT OLD MAN?
...

レ・・・レ

...
...!
The boy from that day!
... SIT TOGETHER?
LET'S...
...

... MM!
HE'S A GOOD CHILD!

Ah...
Argh
I'M GOING THEN, FALCON!
MM!
LET'S GO HOME THEN!



Sign: Shinjuku Primary Bus No. 2

...
MASAKI...
KUMAGAI MASAKI...
... I'M...
...?
... I KNOW, BUT...

Chapter 189 The Pervert Revealed!

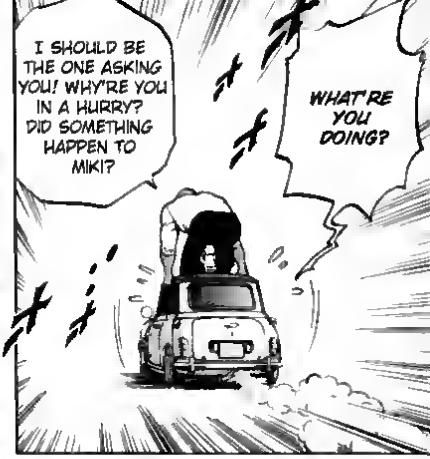
RYO-PAPA, WE'LL NEVER CATCH UP WITH THE BUS AT THIS RATE!
STRANGE, I CAN'T SEEM TO ACCELE-RATE!
THE BUS SHOULD BE ON THE FREEWAY NOW!

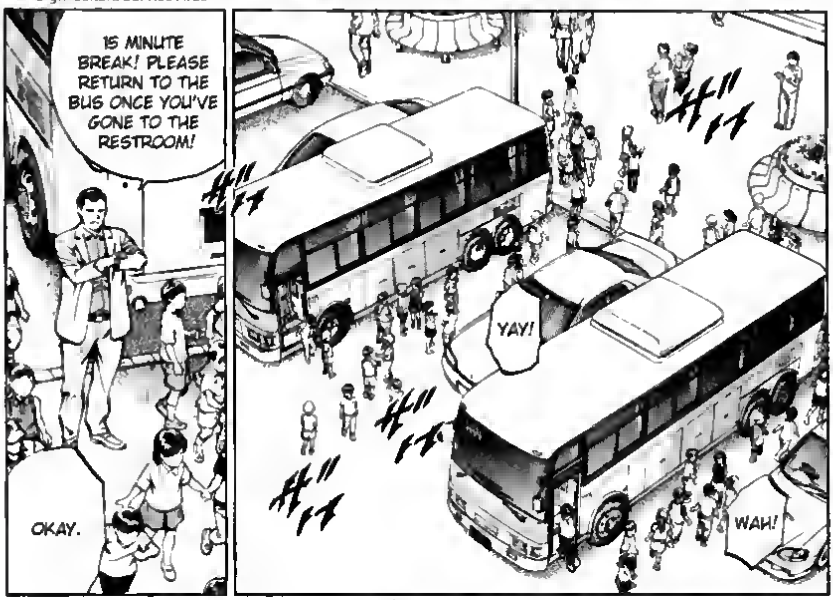
DON'T HIT YOUR HEAD... I'M GOING TO ACCELERATE AND CATCH UP!
WE'RE BEING OVERTAKEN BY CARS ON A STRAIGHT ROAD...?
MIGHT BE A MALFUNCTION. THE HOOD WAS VIBRATING VIOLENTLY WHEN WE LEFT THE SCHOOL.

... PAPA, LOOK AT THE WINDOW...
!?

U... UMI-BOUZU !?

Sign: Sakura Service Area

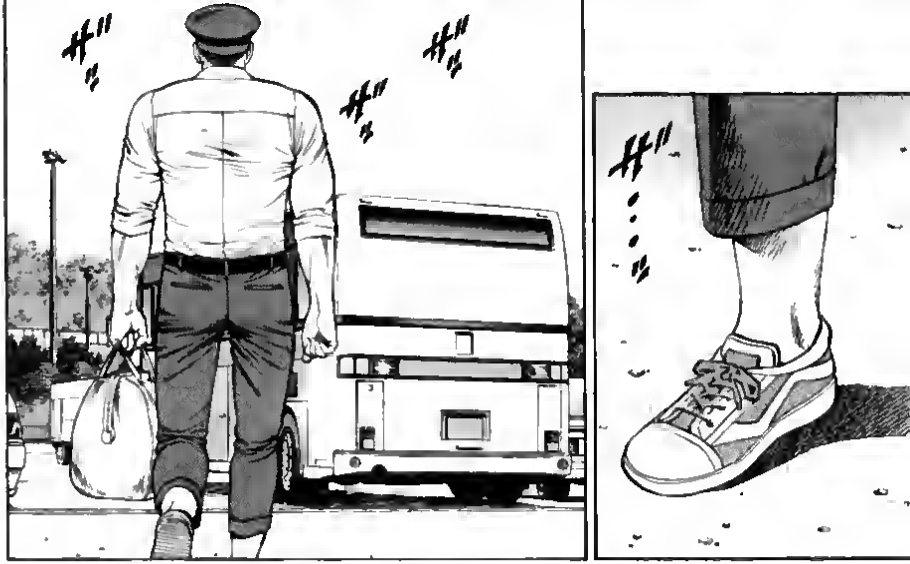


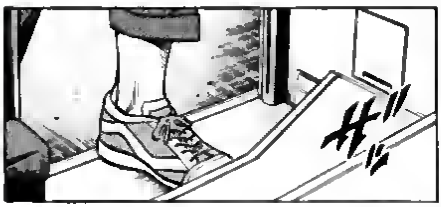


EH... WHY MUST I SUFFER LIKE THIS...
DARN, IT'S ALL THAT FATHER-DAUGHTER COMBO'S FAULT, RUINING MY BENZ!
I WON'T FORGIVE THEM...
Burp
ARGHH UGH!
SIR!
TOILET
MASAKI, WHY'RE YOU WITH THAT MONSTER'S DAUGHTER?
HE'S NOT A MONSTER... I THINK HER DAD IS WAY COOL!
HOW'S HE COOL?
I GOT SCARED TO DEATH, WHEN HE SHOUTED ON THE FIRST DAY!
WHAT'S SO SCARY? I THINK THAT'S COOL!

WOO...
MY DAD'S A MINISTER!
NO WAY... MY DAD'S COOLER!
HE'S MUCH COOLER THAN THE PARENTS WHO JUST KEPT QUIET!
MOM SAID TOO... WE WERE TOO NOISY, WE SHOULD BE SCOLDED!
Zip
WE WON'T CARE IF YOU GET EATEN BY THAT MONSTER!
NOT GONNA ARGUE WITH YOU, YOU'LL NEVER GET IT!
...
DEFINITELY EATEN!
THAT'S RIGHT!

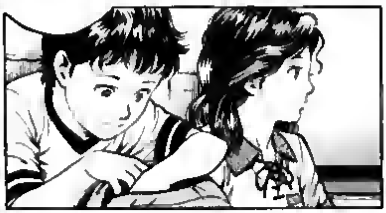
CAN'T THIS PIECE OF JUNK GO ANY FASTER?
THEN GET OUT! GET OUT NOW!
HMPH, THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, IT'LL BE FASTER!
WHY DON'T YOU GET OUT AND RUN!
IT'S YOUR FAULT!
...!
...!
...!
NOW'S NOT THE TIME TO ARGUE! WE HAVE TO CATCH UP WITH MIKI FAST!





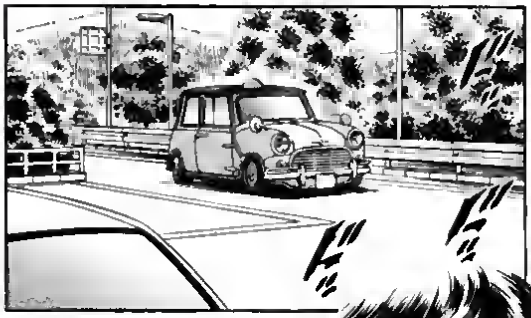
IS EVERYONE HERE? MAKE SURE THE PERSON BESIDE YOU IS HERE...
WE'RE LEAVING IN FIVE MINUTES!

ぬ?



...
LET'S GO THEN!
YOU... DON'T LOOK LIKE THE DRIVER JUST NOW?
HE'S NOT FEELING TOO WELL, SO I'M TAKING OVER.
!?
THE COMPANY INFORMED US THAT THERE'S A JAM AHEAD... BEST TO LEAVE NOW.
EH? EARLIER THAN PLANNED...

IT'S NOT TIME YET...
HEY!



...?

RYO-PAPA! THAT'S THE CAR!
!!

THERE! THAT'S THE BUS, FINALLY CAUGHT UP!
佐倉 サービスエリア

AH-SHAN!
THAT GUY'S STILL AT THE SERVICE AREA!
THERE'S NO ONE!

WHY SO NOISY?
サービスエリア

NO WAY!

...
YOUR TEACHER'S NOT FEELING TOO WELL, LET'S SING SOME SONGS TO LIFT THE MOOD!

ALRIGHT! LET'S HAVE SOME ENTERTAINMENT BEFORE WE ARRIVE!

I'M GOING TO CALL A NUMBER AT RANDOM, THE PERSON CALLED WILL HAVE TO SING A SONG.
9-A
FIRST, THE PERSON AT 9A, PLEASE COME FORWARD.
OKAY!
... ME?
...
ALRIGHT... SING A SONG YOU LIKE!
AH... IT'S YOU...

AH, SONGS YOU LEARN AT SCHOOL WON'T DO! THAT'LL BE BORING...
DON'T BE SHY... POP SONGS, ANIME THEME SONGS ARE ALL FINE!
あはは。。。
I DON'T KNOW MANY SONGS...
EH...
I'LL SING IN HER PLACE!
...
THE PERSON CALLED MUST SING! THAT'S THE RULE!
THAT WOULDN'T DO!

SIR...
COME, HURRY AND SING!
THIS IS A RULE! A TEACHER'S ROLE IS TO TEACH STUDENTS TO ABIDE BY SOCIETY'S RULES!
VICE PRINCIPAL, DON'T FORCE THE CHILDREN...
SING!
SING!
SING!
SING!
SING!
LET'S GIVE HER A ROUND OF APPLAUSE! WE'D LIKE TO HEAR A SONG.
SHUT UP!
SIR...

I'M TELLING YOU TO SING!
IF YOU LIKE TO SING THAT MUCH, WHY DON'T YOU SING?
WHAT'D YOU SAY?
WHAT?
... AH?
MMM...
MMM...
DARN IT...

THIS...
YOU...
A GUN...

Chapter 190
Bus-jacking!

... IT WAS A BULKY BALD MAN, BUT COULD'VE BEEN A CREW CUT!?
GEEZ.
I CAN FINALLY TAKE OFF THIS IRRITATING NECKTIE!
OUCH!
COULD IT BE...
... IT'S HIM?

THEN... HE'S THE KIDNAPPER?
PERVERT?
HE'S A BADDIE?
HE MUST BE THE CULPRIT! THAT PERVERT!
AH... THAT'S HIM! MIKI!
BINGO. ♪
...
Drop
... HOW CAN THIS BE...

佐倉 サービスエリア
THE TOUR BUS WAS HIJACKED?
THE GUY WHO'S CURRENTLY DRIVING BUS NO. 2 ROBBED HIS CLOTHES, AND MASQUERADED AS THE DRIVER.
... THAT'S RIGHT!
Where're your clothes?
WE HAVE TO CALL THE POLICE!
NO WAY! THE STUDENTS HAVE ALL BEEN KIDNAPPED?
THAT IMPOSTOR!
RYO, THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE, LET'S LEAVE NOW!
YEA...

THAT IDIOT... RUNNING OFF WITH THE CAR...
SO MIKI'S DAD WAS INNOCENT!
THAT'S GREAT!
IT'S NOT GOOD AT ALL! KEEP IT DOWN!
BUT...
NEVER MIND, JUST SIT DOWN!

Ah... he's provoking the bad guy...
SO... SO YOU WERE THE ONE? RUINING MY BENZ...
HEHEHE... But I'm just very glad.
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION? DON'T PROVOKE THE BAD GUY!
SHUT UP!
EH...!
I HAVEN'T EVEN FINISHED PAYING THE LOAN FOR IT... YOU BASTARD!
...
HRM, FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK...
WHY... KIDNAP ALL THESE CHILDREN...
THEN...
I DON'T HAVE ANY INTEREST IN THE KIDS!

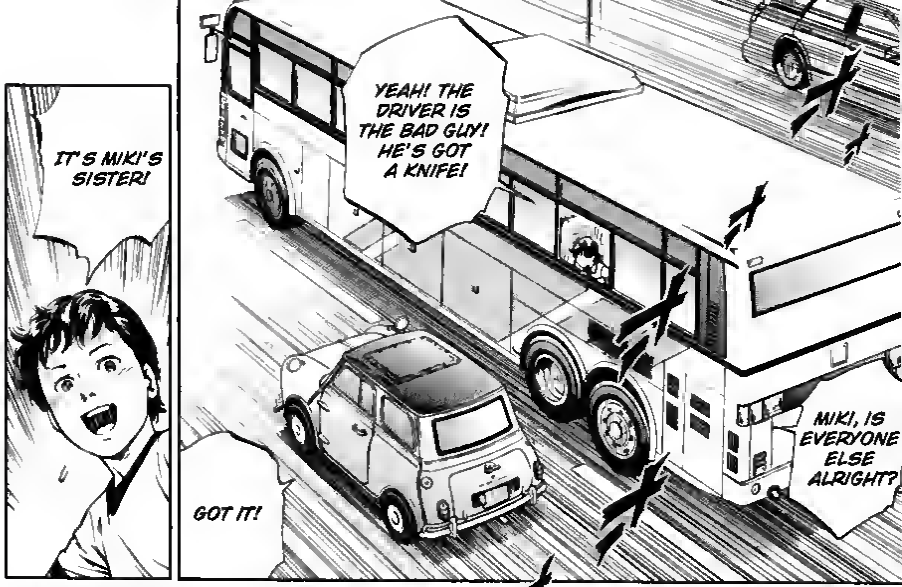
THE GIRL WHO WAS BEING BULLIED BY THIS GUY!
SAY KIDS...
!?
HEY KID, THIS GUY WENT OVER-BOARD DIDN'T HE? SHALL I KILL HIM?
I... wasn't picking on her...
Shut up!
...?
YOU SHUT YA TRAP!
SO... KID? THIS'LL BE PAYBACK FOR HIS ACTIONS!
YOU... HOW CAN YOU TELL A CHILD TO DO THAT!
EH... WAH...!
SAY "FIRE" AND I'LL DO AS YOU SAY... HOW'S THAT?

... YOU...
I believe in you...
I WOULDN'T OBJECT TO YOU FIRING...
MIKI?
EH?

UWAH!
REALLY? THEN IT WOULDN'T BE FUN... IF I DIDN'T!
CAUSE THAT'S NOT A REAL GUN!
BUT EVEN IF YOU FIRED, NO ONE WILL DIE!
THAT TOY GUN CAN'T SCARE ANYONE!
MIKI...?

... YOU ...?
SIR!
UWAH...
BANG
BUT...
HEHE... YOU'RE QUITE OBSERVANT... KID.
THIS IS REAL...
THUD

...
THE DAUGHTER OF A RETIRED SOLDIER... Cool!
RIGHT ...
MIKI, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
SHANIN!


IT'S MIKI'S SISTER!
YEAH! THE DRIVER IS THE BAD GUY! HE'S GOT A KNIFE!
MIKI, IS EVERYONE ELSE ALRIGHT?
GOT IT!

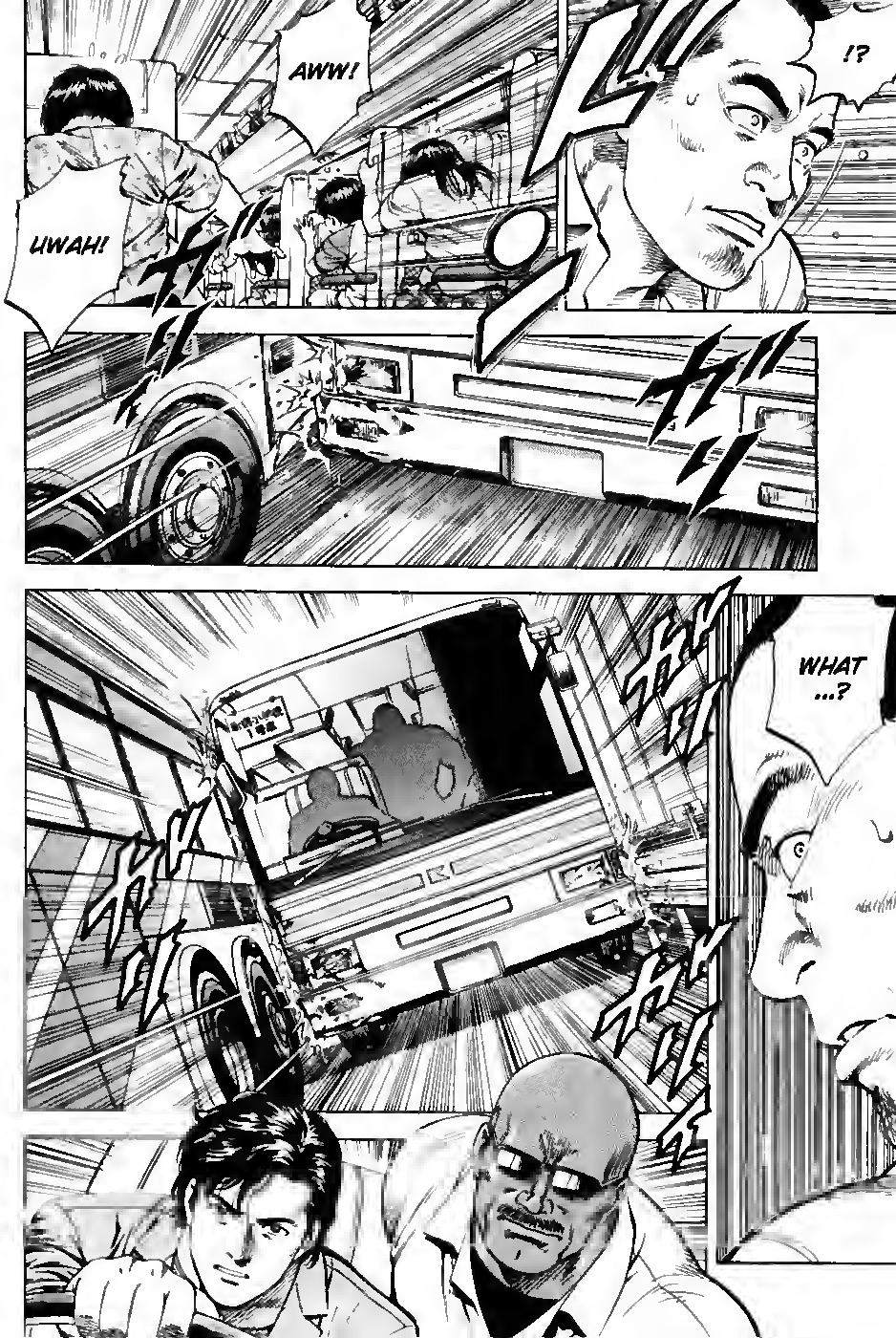
BIG SIS'S HERE!
REALLY! IT'S THE BIG SIS FROM THE OPEN DAY!

!!
MS. SHANIN?
TSK!

UWAH!
WAH!
INTERESTING! I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT WHAT CAN YOUR SMALL CAR DO?
HAH!
ARGH...
BE TOO CONCEITED!
DON'T ...

PUNCTURING THE TIRES WILL CAUSE THE BUS TO SKID...
NO! I CAN'T HARM THE CHILDREN!
HAHA! INTERESTING! I'LL CRUSH YOU!
...
SIT AND WATCH, THIS IS VERY INTERESTING!
STO... STOP IT!

HAHA! SANDWICHED!
I'LL CRUSH YOU!
SHANIN!


AWW!
!?
UWAH!
WHAT ...?

FAL-
CON!
RYO-
PAPA!
MINI!
MY MINI...
IT'S
COMPLETELY
GONE...
MI-
KI!
YOU
SHOULD BE
WORRYING
ABOUT ME
...

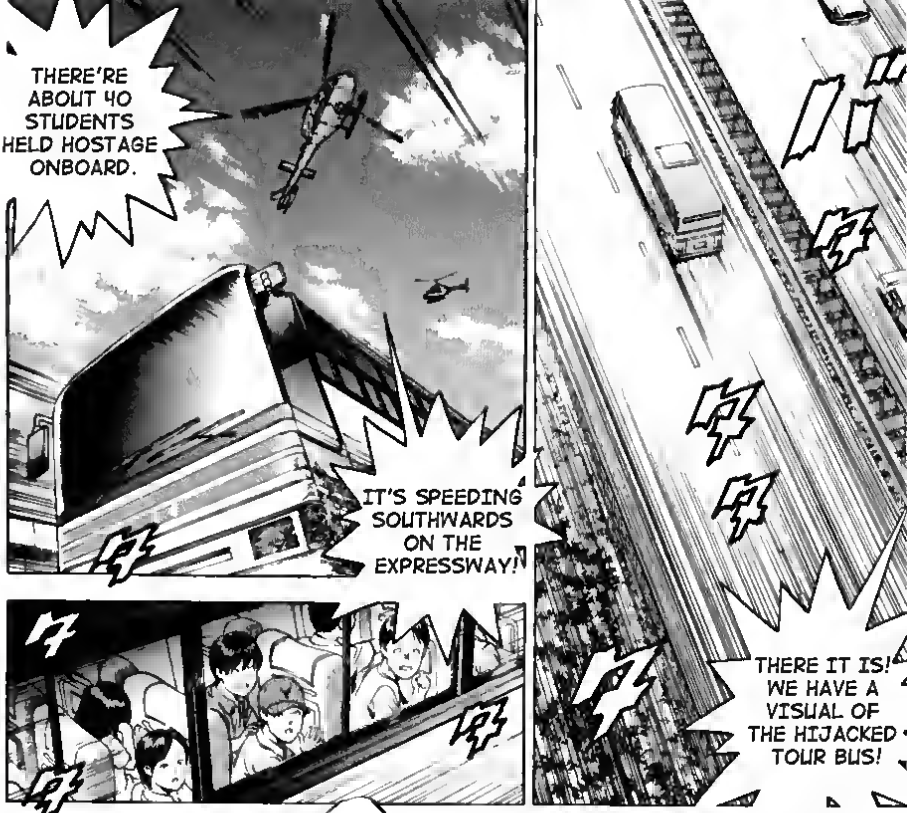
Chapter 191
Thrilling Car Chase!

I KNOW...
BUT I'VE LOST CONTROL OF THE CAR!
The accelerator and brake aren't working, neither is the steering wheel!
AH-SHAN, HURRY AND ESCAPE!
TSK!
LOOKS LIKE I HAVE TO ABANDON THIS CAR AND GET ON THE BUS.

DARN, TOO LATE!
AH... THAT GIRL ABANDONED MY CAR!
PHHH PHHH

バッ
!!
OH NO!

ブロロロロ
ブロロロロ
...
RYO! WHY'RE YOU STOPPING!? CATCH UP WITH THAT BUS!
コア・テレビ
COA-TV
THAT MEDIA HELICOPTER IS TRACKING THE BUS!
HOW'D THEY REACH HERE SO FAST?
ブロロロロ
URGH!


THERE'RE ABOUT 40 STUDENTS HELD HOSTAGE ONBOARD.
IT'S SPEEDING SOUTHWARDS ON THE EXPRESSWAY!
THERE IT IS! WE HAVE A VISUAL OF THE HIJACKED TOUR BUS!

BELIEVE ME NOW? YOU CAN REPORT THIS BIG PIECE OF NEWS LIVE... HAHAHA!
...!
I TOLD YA, DIDN'T I? THAT I'D HIJACK THIS TOUR BUS WITH THE STUDENTS AT SAKURA SERVICE AREA!
SO... I DIDN'T LIE TO YOU, DID I?

FALCON...
DARN!
TELL THE GUYS IN THE HELICOPTER TO GET AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE!
REMEMBER TO GET A GOOD SHOT OF ME... HAHAHA ...
...
IF WE CAN CAPTURE THE INSIDE OF THE BUS OUR RATINGS WILL SKYROCKET!
THIS GUY... EVEN PERSONALLY CONTACTED THE MEDIA... WHAT IS HE THINKING?
THE SUSPECT HAD WARNED US THAT HE WOULD HIJACK A TOUR BUS .
THIS IS A RECORDING OF A PHONE CALL FROM THE SUSPECT.
MINI... MY... MINI...

THIS AIN'T NO PERVERT! HE'S ENJOYING THIS!
HMM?
THIS GUY... WAS LAUGHING WHEN HE TRIED TO CRUSH MY CAR JUST NOW...
THIS IS BAD, WHO KNOWS WHAT HE MIGHT DO NEXT! I'D PREFER HIM TO BE A PERVERT.
ENJOYING THIS...
A ROAD BLOCK IS SET UP BEFORE SAKAE INTERSECTION, IN AN ATTEMPT TO HALT THE TOUR BUS.
THE POLICE HAVE MOBILIZED AND SET UP A ROAD BLOCK UP AHEAD.
I'LL BE THERE SOON! HOLD ON!
MIKI
ooo

THE COPS FINALLY APPEAR!
HEHE... A ROAD BLOCK, IS IT?
PLEASE STOP THE BUS!
...
ALL THE CAST HAVE GATHERED, IT'S TIME FOR THE CLIMAX!
HOW COMPASSIONATE, AS EXPECTED FROM A TEACHER. DON'T LET THE CHILDREN GET HURT!
WHY'RE YOU DOING THIS? THESE CHILDREN ARE INNOCENT! PLEASE LET THESE CHILDREN OFF THE BUS AT THE ROAD BLOCK!
...

AHH!
!?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING ...?
THE REAL CHASE BEGINS HERE! ENJOY THE RIDE... MISS!
HAH! NO ONE'LL BE STUPID ENOUGH TO STOP THE BUS!
DO NOT RESIST, JUST STOP THE BUS!
STOP THE BUS!
千葉県 警察
!!
EVERYONE, HOLD ON TO SOMETHING AND KEEP YOUR HEAD LOW!

...
MIKI, WHAT'RE YOU DOING? GET DOWN!
!!
STOP THE VEHICLE!
WAH!
UWAH!

AHA HA HA HA...
SOB... SOB...
...
WAA... WAA...
AH... INCRE-DIBLE!
HURRY UP!
FALCON !...

ALMOST THERE!
SHANIN!
THE TOUR BUS HAS PASSED THE ROAD BLOCK!
IT'S SPEEDING UP! THE POLICE ARE HOT ON ITS TAIL!
STOP THIS INSTANT, THERE'S A JAM UP AHEAD!
YOU HAVE NOWHERE TO RUN, STOP NOW!
HMPH... JAM IS IT...

MMM...
CLICK
...! SIR!
YAWN...
MMM?
ARE YOU NOT AWAKE YET?
AHH, WHAT A NICE NAP... SHINDOU, ARE WE THERE YET?
!?
HERE YA GO... KEEP THE CHANGE!

FANTASTIC! THIS IS UNBELIE-VABLE!
UWAH ...
WAH!

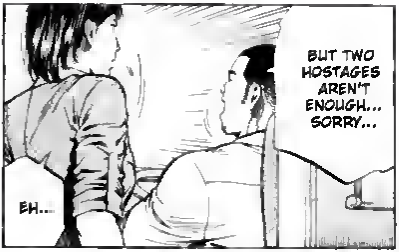
...
HAHAHA HAHAHA HA!
HOW CAN YOU FAINT NOW? THIS IS IRRESPONSIBLE! WAKE UP!
SHINDOU... I'LL LEAVE THE REST TO YOU...
SIR?
... THEN ...
...
You're pretending to be asleep!
WOO...
IT'S A BOMB! THE SUSPECT HAS BOMBS!
THREE POLICE CARS HAVE BEEN WRECKED! MANY MORE OFFICERS ARE INJURED!

I'VE GOT MORE FIRE-WORKS WITH ME! COME ENTERTAIN ME!
HOW'S THAT... THE FIRE-WORKS GOOD ENOUGH!? KEEP CHASING, YA COPS!
UMIBOUZU, WE'VE CAUGHT UP!
AHA HA HA HA...
HE'S NUTS!
MIKI, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!
MINI...

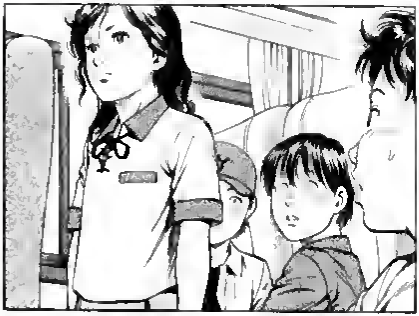
Chapter 192
Family Conversation

THE HIJACKED TOUR BUS HAS FORTY CHILDREN ON BOARD AND IS STILL SPEEDING SOUTH ON THE HIGHWAY!
HIC... HIC...
SOB... SOB...
AHH! AHH!
IT MAKES THE ATMOSPHERE SO TENSE. EVEN I'M NERVOUS!
THE KIDS' YAMMERING IS AWE-SOME!
THE SUSPECT'S MOTIVE AND DEMANDS ARE UNKNOWN!

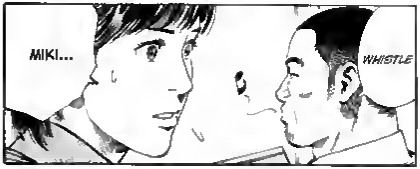
SOB... SOB...
HIC... HIC...
SOB SOB.
HEY, STOP THE BUS!
I'M BEGGING YOU, PLEASE STOP IT!
YES KEEP IT UP SHINDOU!
IF YOU WANT A HOSTAGE, TAKE ME!
PLEASE STOP PUTTING MY STUDENTS' LIVES IN DANGER!
...
EHH!?
ME TOO?
WOULD US TWO ADULTS BE ENOUGH AS HOSTAGES?
PLEASE LET THE CHILDREN GO!
Hah!
HMM... MMM...


BUT TWO HOSTAGES AREN'T ENOUGH... SORRY...
EH...

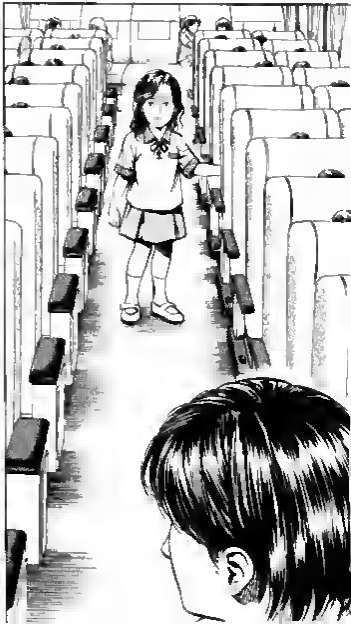
I'M TOUCHED... THIS IS LIKE A SCENE IN A DRAMA... I'M GONNA CRY...



THEN... I'LL STAY TOO!


MIKI...
WHISTLE

IF IT WERE PAPA, HE'D DO IT.
MIKI WHAT ARE YOU SAYING... THAT'S TOO DANGEROUS...



PAPA WOULD SURELY DO THE SAME!
THEN ...
THEN I'LL STAY TOO!
I'M STAYING!
MASAKI ...
NO...
NOT YOU TWO!
THIS IS SO TOUCHING, TEACHER AND STUDENTS!
YOUR DEVOTION IS BRINGING TEARS TO MY EYES, SOB SOB.
パチ パチ パチ
BUT,
NO MEANS NO.

WHY SETTLE WITH FOUR PEOPLE WHEN I CAN TAKE FORTY KIDS TO HELL!
SACRIFICING THE ENTIRE BUS WILL HAVE A MUCH BIGGER IMPACT ON SOCIETY!
ALL OVER THE FRONT PAGE OF THE NEWS, IN FULL COLOR! OH YEAH!
SO COOL! MY NAME IS DEATH!
IF I CRASH INTO THE ROAD BLOCK UP AHEAD, THERE'LL BE MORE CASUALTIES!
THEN I'LL DETONATE THE BOMB, AND THE EXPLOSION WILL KILL EVEN MORE!
...
FUU...
HEHEHE ...

TRAFFIC'S AT A STANDSTILL 20KM DOWN THE HIGHWAY!
SANE ...
THIS GUY'S IN...
BUT THE BUS IS STILL SPEEDING ALONG WITH NO SIGN OF STOPPING!
IT'S RUSHING TOWARDS THE TRAFFIC JAM!
THIS GUY IS CRAZY!
THE TOUR BUS, CRUISING AT 90KM/H, WILL HIT THE JAM IN ABOUT 15 MINUTES

BUT IF EVERYTHING GOES WELL, HE'LL BE CAUGHT!
BUT...
UNLESS HE DOESN'T KNOW OF THE JAM...
IF HE GOT STUCK IN THE JAM, THERE'S NO ESCAPE FOR HIM!
NO WAY!
WHAT IF HE CHARGES INTO THE JAM?
HE'S CARRYING BOMBS
munch
HA... HAHA.
NO WAY.
WE'RE GONNA DIE, AREN'T WE!?
SOB... SOB...
WAH... WAH... MAMA ...

SOMEONE WILL SAVE US, JUST BE PATIENT!
IT'LL BE ALRIGHT, HELP'LL COME!
DON'T CRY EVERYONE, CALM DOWN!
WHO... WILL COME SAVE US ...
SOB... SOB...
WAH... WAH...
...
THERE'S NO WAY...
EVEN THE POLICE-MEN...
SO DON'T CRY! PAPA'S REALLY STRONG, YOU'VE SEEN HIM IN ACTION!
DON'T WORRY, MY DAD WILL COME!
YEAH, HE'S A FORMER SOLDIER! HE'S STRONG!
...

CHEER UP! THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU, KOU! DON'T WORRY, MII!

NO WAY... WE'RE DEAD!
BUT MASAKI... IS HE REALLY COMING?
DON'T SAY SUCH THINGS!

MIKI...

RRIIII RING

HMPH ...

ANSWER IT! LET THEM HEAR THE HOSTAGES' CRIES. HEHEHE...
beep
MIKI'S FATHER!
HELLO, THIS IS SHINDOU.
MISS SHINDOU, ARE YOU ALRIGHT? I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU NOW.
YES... SHE'S FINE AS WELL.
AND MIKI...?
I'M OKAY.

HEHEHE .. LEMME CALL THE NEWS STATION
BEEP
THE SUSPECT?
YES, HE'S...
FALCON!
...
TSK, CRAZY SUICIDE BOMBER
HE'S PLANNING TO CHARGE INTO THE TRAFFIC JAM, AND THEN DETONATE THE BOMB...
GOT IT... CAN I TALK TO MIKI?
YES ..

...
SHE'S CHEERING UP EVERYONE... TELLING THEM THAT THEY'LL GROW UP TO BE LIKE THEIR PARENTS...
MIKI'S BEEN TRYING HARD...
...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
THIS IS ALL... TRUE!
FALCON!
MIKI...

YOU'VE DONE WELL MIKI, VERY WELL!
...MMM.
MM... I TRUST YOU.
TRUST ME AND WAIT FOR ME, OKAY?
...
...PAPA!

YOU'RE A GOOD CHILD...
beep
UMIBOUZU ...?

YOU REALLY ...
LOOK LIKE A FATHER ...

...?
FOR GUYS LIKE US TO BECOME PARENTS... WHAT SORTA PRANK IS HEAVEN PLAYING?

WE, WHO LIVE IN SEARCH OF A PLACE TO DIE... ARE GONNA PUT OUR LIVES ON THE LINE FOR OUR CHILDREN...
...

THIS IS JUST PERFECT!
新宿小学校
1号
LET'S GO!

Chapter 193
A Furious Strike!

LET'S GO!
READY!
ARE WE READY?
I'LL TAKE LEFT!
THEN I'M RIGHT!

WHAT... SHOULD I DO?
HAHAHA... I HAVE NO WAY TO RUN?
SOB... SOB...
...
HIC... HIC...
THANKS FOR NOTHING! I AIN'T STOPPING THIS BUS!
THERE AREN'T ANY INTER-SECTIONS, THERE'S NO OTHER ESCAPE ROUTES.
YOU'RE NOT STOPPING... DON'T YOU KNOW THERE'S A JAM UP AHEAD?

YOU MEAN ...?
SIGH, I TOLD YOU I'M NOT STOPPING!
THE POLICE ARE WAITING AT THE END OF THE JAM, THEY'LL SURROUND YOU WHEN YOU STOP MOVING
HEHEHE... DON'T GET IT? LEMME TELL YA
I'LL CHARGE RIGHT INTO THE JAM!
WITH FORTY KIDS AND A BOMB!
WHA...
like I thought

CHARGE INTO US!
THERE'LL BE SOME MAGNIFICENT FIREWORKS! DON'T YA MISS SUCH A DECISIVE MOMENT!
HEHEHE .. I'LL BE ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES!
KYAAA!
ARGHH, RUN FOR IT!
WE'LL BE CAUGHT IN THE BLAST!
CALM DOWN, WE HAVE TIME! CALM DOWN, EVERYONE...
AHHH!
HYAAA!

SOON, EVERYONE WILL BE CAUGHT IN THIS! HAHAHA...
WHAT THE...?

THE SUSPECT'S LOST IT!
THEY'RE CHARGING INTO THE JAM!
THE SIDE MIRRORS ...?
...
WHAT HAPPENED ...?
THE TOUR BUS WILL BE REACHING THE JAM SOON, THOSE WHO CAN HEAR THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, PLEASE SEEK SHELT... HMM?
WHAT'S THAT?

PAPA!
PAPA'S HERE!
IT'S REALLY MIKI'S PAPA!
HE... REALLY CAME!
...

PAPA!
HELP!
HELP US!
PAPA? SOME PARENT CAUGHT UP?
THERE'S ANOTHER BUS ON THE BLOCKED-OFF HIGHWAY...
IT'S APPROACHING THE HIJACKED BUS! JUST WHO IS IT? WHAT'S THEIR OBJECTIVE?
HAH! THIS IS HILA-RIOUS!

TCH!
!
UWAHH!
THIS IS NO TIME FOR A PARENT TO BE A HERO!
KYAA!
HAHAH... TAKE THIS!
MIKI, MASAKI, GET BACK TO YOUR SEATS!
EVERY-ONE, HOLD ON TO YOUR SEATS!

AH...!
ズ…
ドン
KYAA!
MIKI!
ヒュ
NO-
NO PROBS!
YEA...
TH... THANKS, KOU.

EVERYONE, HANG IN THERE! WE'LL BE SAVED SOON!
...
NOISE!?
IT'S ENGINE NOISE!
THIS PLACE'S NO GOOD!
IT'S HERE!
RUN TO THE FRONT! THE FRONT!

IT MIGHT GET WORSE, UMIBOUZU!!
GOT IT!
USELESS PRICK, ONE MORE TIME!

UWAH!?
KYAA!
DA... DARN!
OHHH!

OHHH!
OHH!
A PARENT... ARE YOU KIDDING!?
OH-
OHH!

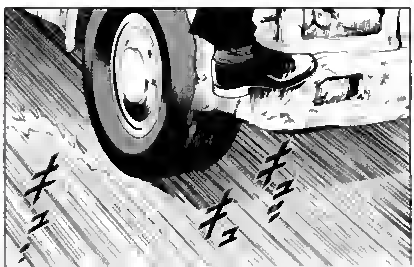
OHH-
OH!
BUHA HAHAHA!
MIC!

Chapter 194
Father and Daughter's Determination

WAHHH, WHAT'S THIS? THIS IS NUTS!
ズル…
ズルル…
ヒク…

ゲラゲラ
!?

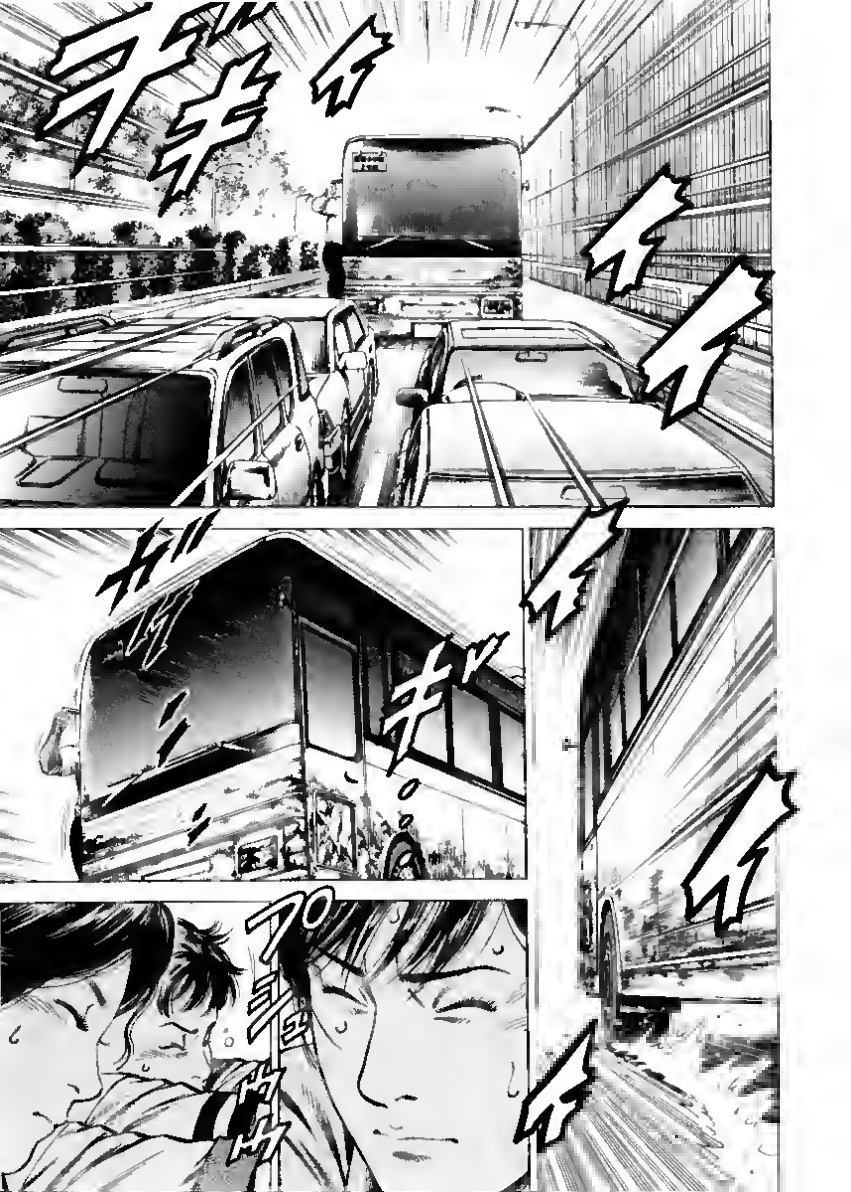
AH...
EH...!


キュー
キュー
キュー

!
UMIBOUZU! EMERGENCY BRAKE!
TCH... EVEN IF YOU SAY SO, I NEED TO GET IN FIRST!
VICE PRINCIPAL, DON'T JUST SIT THERE! HIT THE BRAKES!
IF THIS CONTINUES, WE'LL CRASH INTO THE TRAFFIC UP AHEAD!
HAH...? WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' ...?

HYAAH, WE'RE CRASHING!
THE TRAFFIC ?
Y-YES!
MISS SHINDOU!
VICE PRINCIPAL!
ARGHH... ARGHH!
IT'S OVER, THEY'LL CRASH!
IT'S NO GOOD, THEY'RE NOT GONNA STOP IN TIME!

ARGH!
GET DOWN!
TAKE COVER!
PEDAL ...?
AH... I DON'T HAVE A LICENSE...
HURRY!
THE CENTER ONE. IT SHOULD BE THE LARGEST!
WH-WHICH ONE?
STEP ON THE PEDAL BY YOUR FEET!
THIS... ONE?
UMIBOUZU, HURRY UP!



...!
ゴゴゴゴ
...?
THEY STOPPED ..?
SAFE...
ミシミシ
IT DIDN'T ...
...
EXPLODE ...?

WE'RE SAVED...
AREN'T WE...
MISS SHINDOU...!
?...
WE'RE SAVED!
STOPPED...?
WE...
AL-RIGHT!
SOB... SOB...
UWAH... UWAH...
IT STOPPED!
MAMA... SOB...
UWAH... UWAH...

Tick
Tick
Tick
Tick
Tick
tick
DON'T TELL ME ...!
Tick
tick
WHERE'S THE BOMB!? THE TIMER'S PROBABLY STILL RUNNING!
THE BOMB!?
HYAAAH, BOMB!?
VICE PRINCIPAL, WHERE'S THE BOMB? I CAN'T SEE, WHERE IS IT!?

KYAAH!
IT'S GOING TO BLOW!?
VICE PRINCIPAL, I'LL OPEN THE DOOR, THROW THE BOMB OUT! THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO DO, I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST!
HYAA... HYAAH!
THIS SHOULD BE THE CONTROL FOR THE FRONT DOOR!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH, SAVE ME!
...
VICE PRINCIPAL, SHOW THEM THAT YOU'RE A MAN!

I GOT THE BOMB! OPEN THE DOOR!
MIKI ...!?
MIKI!?
MIKI!
QUICK OR EVERYONE'S GOING TO DIE, PAPA!

MIKI!
DON'T COME HERE!
QUICK, PAPA!
GO, MIKI!
プシュー

MIKI!
WELL DONE, MIKI!

Tick...
Tick...
AMATEUR LEVEL ...!
...
GOOD WORK, MIKI!
HERE, DONE!

MIKI...
PA...
とう…
ふう…

PAPA!
PAPA!

Chapter 195
The End of Summer Vacation

MIKI...
UWAHH!
...?
I...?

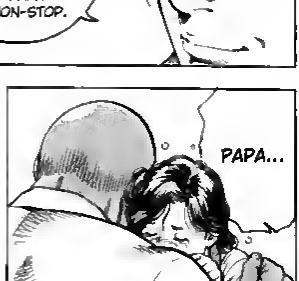
...
MISS SHINDOU!
PAPA!
PAPA!
MIKI
PAPAA!

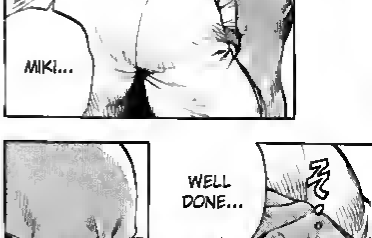
...
WORDS STEMMING FROM THE HEART.

THEY'VE FINALLY CLOSED THE DISTANCE.

THE MIKI NOW PROBABLY DOESN'T REALIZE THAT SHE'S CALLING UMIBOUZU "PAPA" NON-STOP.

IF I... HAVE TO BE ON A BATTLEFIELD AGAIN...
I WANT TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE YOU!


PAPA...
MIKI...

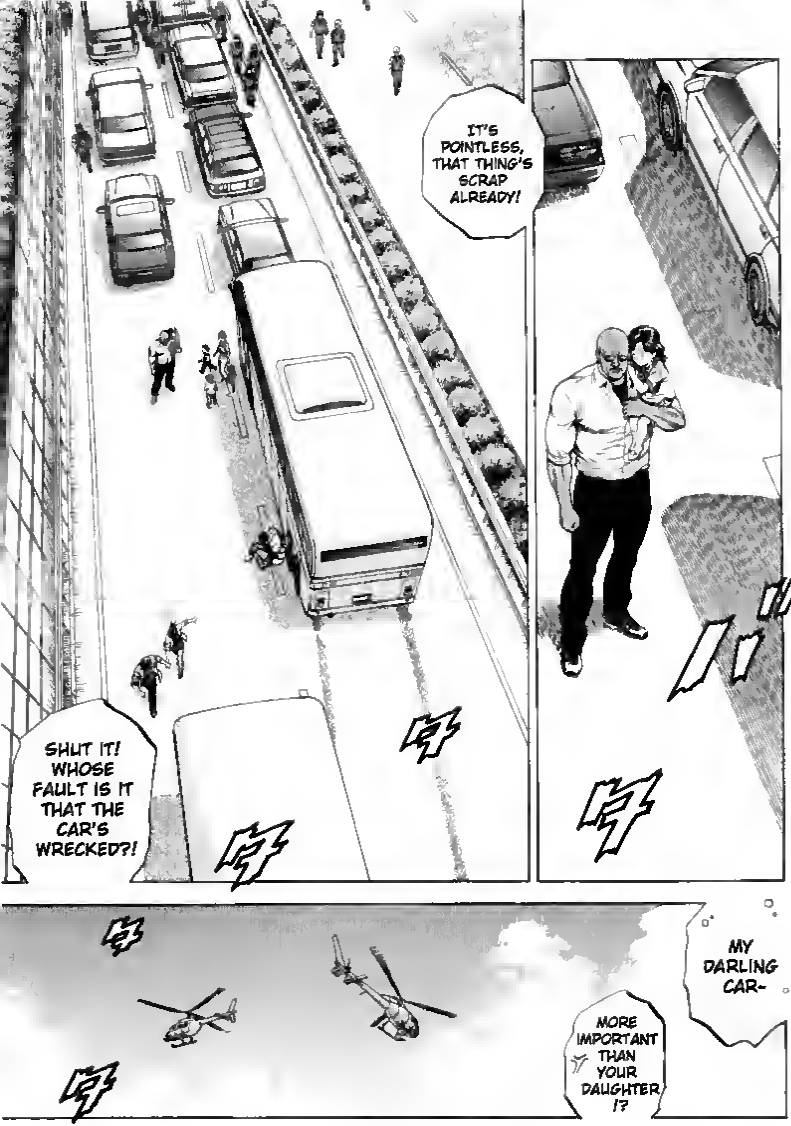

WELL DONE...

AHA HAHA ...
WHAT? FIGHT TOGETHER WITH MIKI?
THAT'S THE HIGHEST PRAISE HE'LL EVER SAY TO SOMEONE
IT'S HEARTFELT LOVE.
...
COOL ...!
CO-

REALLY
...
AMAZING
...
...
REAL
...
FAMILY
...
...
ANYHOW, THOSE TWO HAVE BECOME A REAL FAMILY.
...

HMM ...?
PAPA ...!
I DID MY BEST, TOO!
WHACHA WANT?
PAPA!
SO ...?
HEY, ENOUGH ALREADY!
AHA HAHA...
AH! NOT SO ROUGH, GENTLER!
I GOT IT, I GOT IT!
GREAT, REALLY GREAT!

GOING SOLO IS TOO DANGEROUS ...
BUT... DON'T WORRY ME TOO MUCH.
...
PAPA?
...
EHH?
OH YEAH! I'M GONNA JUMPSTART THE WRECKED MINI! COME HELP ME!
MINI...


IT'S POINTLESS, THAT THING'S SCRAP ALREADY!
SHUT IT! WHOSE FAULT IS IT THAT THE CAR'S WRECKED?!
MY DARLING CAR-
MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR DAUGHTER!?

AND TO PROTECT THE STUDENTS, YOU FOUGHT WITH THE SUSPECT?
WELL... AS AN EDUCATOR, THIS IS MY RESPONSIBILITY
AHEM.
SHINDOU WAS TERRIFIED, BUT SHE DID WELL TOO...
I FOUGHT THE SUSPECT ALL ALONE, PROTECTING MY STUDENTS WITH ALL MY MIGHT! PUTTING THIS OLD LIFE ON THE LINE!
OHH~
...
SHINDOU ...?
HENCE, THE STUDENTS ARE SAFE AND SOUND, THIS JOY AND SATISFACTION CANNOT BE DESCRIBED IN WORDS.
SUCH A MODEL TEACHER!
YOU...
WHAT'S WRONG? DIDN'T I TELL YOU JUST TO NOD?

TWISTED THE STORY! GOOD-FOR-NOTHING LIAR!
YOU COMPLETELY ...
HUH?
WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE TENDING THE STORE, WHEN EVERYONE'S HAVING SO MUCH FUN!
DARN~
AH~ THAT FELT GOOD~!
...

Caw
RE-JECTED!
I ALONE ...
AND SUMMER VACATION ENDS...
Sign: Year 1 Class 3
GOOD MORNING, MASAKI
HOW WAS SUMMER BREAK?
MIKI, MORNING!

HEY, YOU TWO!
WHA... KOU'S TANNED!
HEHE HE...
COOL, WHERE'D YOU GO TO GET THIS BURNT?
TCH, TCH, TCH...
NOT ONLY THAT.
HMPH.

HEHEHE, THERE'S MORE SURPRISES!
HOW'S THAT, COOL RIGHT?
...
MIKI!
GOOD MORNIN',
GOOD... MORNING ...
Who, who and who?
PEN

GRIN
YOU'RE FAMOUS, FALCON!
あはは
SHUT UP!
DOES THIS MEAN YOU ARE GOING TO START YOUR OWN FAN CLUB?
はは
HMPH!
NOT LIKE HE CAN HELP IT...
Sniiiker
...
...
AH~ GEEZ, I'VE NO CONFIDENCE IN GOING TO THAT CLASS ANYMORE!
I CAN'T TELL WHO'S WHO!
SIGH, EVERY-ONE'S WEIRD!

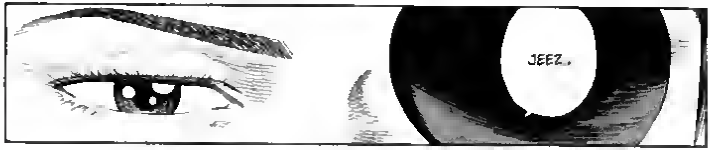
フッ…
YOUR DAD...
WHAT KIND OF HAIRSTYLE DOES HE LIKE IN GIRLS...
SHINDOU ...?
OH, AND MISS SHINDOU'S TURNED WEIRD TOO.
HMM .. SHE CALLED ME OVER TODAY..
DON'T TELL ME ...!
SLURP
AH~ SHE WAS BLUSHING WHEN SHE SAID THAT.

AH... NO WAY!
THEN!
...?
It's said and done, nothing you can do!
...
NO WAY MEANS NO WAY!
AHH, FALCON, WE'RE JUST SPECULATING~
DO SOMETHING! ON MY FRIENDSHIP WITH YOU, YUME, PLEASE!
ELSEWHERE
PLEASE!
DOESN'T MATTER, IMPOSSIBLE MEANS IMPOSSIBLE!
(C)Tsunihara Ryuji

CHRISTMAS, HUH...
SFX: chattering
WHAT SHOULD I GIVE SHANIN THIS YEAR ...?
TO A MAN, THIS IS THE MOST AGONIZING TIME OF THE YEAR...
I DIDN'T MANAGE TO LAST YEAR.. LET'S DISCUSS THIS WITH MY WALLET.
Xmas
ミキ
♪.....
♪.....
♪.....
!

Chapter 196
Yang Returns!

♫…♪
オソンホール
♪…♫
♫…♪


JEEZ.

ISN'T THAT…
…
THEY'RE ALWAYS SO SHAMELESSLY CHEERY HERE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON!

YANG…?
FANG-YU…

YOU SAW FANG-YU !?
YOU SURE, SHIN-HON?
HMM.. PROBABLY
...
BUT A WOMAN WITH SUCH AN AURA... BUT IF I COULD CONFIRM...
TOO MANY BUTS, SHIN-HON!
YOU GOT THE WRONG PERSON
I ONLY SAW HER ONCE AND IT WAS ONLY FROM THE BACK...
WHY PROBABLY?

HAHAHAHAHA... THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD COMPLETE THE VACCINE SO SOON!
FANG-YU'S CURRENTLY RESEARCHING A VACCINE FOR A BIOLOGICAL WEAPON AT SEA!
PAPA ...?
IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN A YEAR! HAHAHAHA...
COFFEE HOUSE
S-SHE SAID SHE'D FINISH THE VACCINE IN SIX MONTHS, DEFINITELY IMPOSSIBLE!!
!!
RYO ..!
I COMPLETED THE VACCINE...
SHE JUST CAN'T BE HERE IN JAPAN!
SHE'S STILL OUT ON THE OCEAN!
I SAID PAPA!
RYO-PAPA ...!

COFFEE HOUSE
THREE WEEKS AGO...

MS. YANG!

HAHAHA, YOU LOOK WELL, SHANIN!
WELCOME BACK, MS. YANG!

RYO...
YUP! CONGRATULATIONS ON COMPLETING THE VACCINE!
AHH THAT'S ONE TASK OUTTA THE WAY, A BURDEN OFF MY SHOULDERS
SFX flinch
MAIL
beep
SFX hoo
SFX pull out
ほぉ〜
SENDING MAIL
beep
MAIL SENT
Cha-Kang
...?

AHA AHA AHA AHA...
...
H-HEY FANG-YU! HAPPY BIRTHDAY! I WAS JUST SENDING YOU A BIRTHDAY MESSAGE!
AH... HUH?
MY BIRTH-DAY'S THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW
SFX: haa...
はぁ
OH... YOU DIDN'T COME HERE FOR THAT? SO I GOT IT WRONG...
TSK TSK, MY BIRTHDAY, THE EASIEST DATE TO REMEMBER IN THE WORLD, YET YOU SEEM TO HAVE NO PROBLEM FORGETTING IT.
25 Dec!
HAHAHA ... WHAT A GUY..
Ouch...
SFX: glare
キッ
YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ME AT ALL ...!
Has

"MINOR BUSINESS"? GIMME A BREAK...
THOUGH... I HAVE SOME MINOR BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF... I WANT YOU TO COME WITH ME FOR IT.

CAME HERE FOR A VACATION, MS. YANG?

I GUESS YOU CAN CALL IT... A VACATION

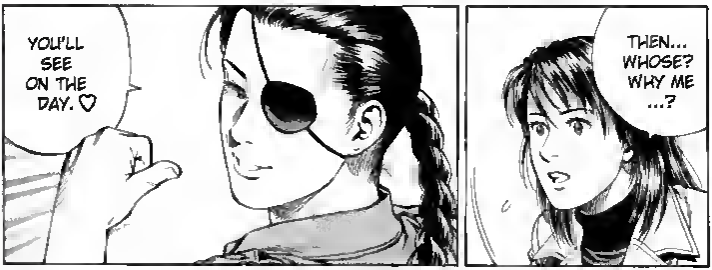
THERE'S A WEDDING THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW, I NEED YOU TO COME WITH ME!

JUST... ME?
YOU STAY OUT OF THIS! MY BUSINESS IS WITH SHANIN!

IS IT SOMETHING TROUBLESOME AGAIN!?

WHO SAID IT WAS MINE!?
メキ目
WED-...!?
WHICH POOR GUY IS MARRYING YOU!?

SFX Crush


YOU'LL SEE ON THE DAY. ♡
THEN... WHOSE? WHY ME ...?

AND RYO...
HAA ...?
ALRIGHT? YOU'VE GOTTA COME!

YOU BETTER NOT TURN UP! PEOPLE LIKE YOU, WHO'LL EVEN FLIRT WITH AN ENGAGED WOMAN, ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED!!
...
...
I FEEL OUT OF PLACE HERE...
SHANIN!
MS. YANG...
COME, THIS WAY!

KYAAAAA!
IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE. YOU'RE AN IMPORTANT PRESENT!
HEY, IS IT REALLY OKAY FOR ME TO BE HERE?
PRESENT ...?
RYO-PAPA!?
D-DON'T TELL ME!?
SFX kyaaa!
COME HERE!
ME, ME!!
NO, IT'S MINE!
SFX kyaaa

...
... AM I GETTING OVERLY ANXIOUS?
HAHA HA...
Sign: Hotta Family Waiting Room
BUT, THIS IS
IT'S ALRIGHT!
IT'S HERE, GO IN.
堀田家控室
...?

RYO... PAPA?
WHAT'S WRONG, SHANIN?
...
HUH?
YOUR HUSBAND'S QUITE AN AMICABLE FELLOW.
INDEED ...
OH, MS. YANG.
YO, YOU'RE LATE FANG-YU!
YOU! OF ALL THE THINGS TO SAY...
カリ
HUS-BAND ...

JUST PLAY ALONG! LET'S BE A COUPLE FOR THE DAY... OK?
CHILL, LET'S NOT GET VIOLENT HERE. BESIDES I DIDN'T SAY IT, THEY JUST ASSUMED IT!
...
WHAT-EVER YOU SAY!
Hehe Lol
MS. YANG'S BLUSHING .?
MS. YANG, COULD THIS GIRL BE ...?
WE ONLY JUST MET...
WHAT'S UP WITH THEM? WHY ARE THEY LOOKING AT ME WITH SUCH WARM EYES...
SHANIN, THESE ARE THE BRIDE'S PARENTS, MR & MRS HOTTA.
AH... YES, SHE'S THE ONE I MENTIONED, SHANIN.
H-HELLO
SFX thump thump
IT DOESN'T FEEL THAT WAY...
BUT ...
WE ONLY JUST MET ...?
HM.

PLEASE, WATCH YOUR STEP.
SFX: oh...
THE BRIDE'S READY.
PLEASE EXCUSE ME.

SFX: thump
SFX: thump
THIS PERSON... DOES KAORI-MAMA KNOW HER...?
AH-SHAN ...?
WHAT ...?
SFX: thump
MAMA'S OVERJOYED...
KAORI ... MAMA !...?
SFX: thump

Chapter 197

A Ring's Memories

SFX thump
SU-CHIN...
BEAUTI-FUL...
From Mandarin: Thanks, Mom.
XIE XIE, MAMA...

WHEN SHE CAME TO JAPAN, SHE BECAME THE ADOPTED CHILD OF THE HOTTAS...
SHE WAS ONCE MY DAUGHTER.
...
MAMA ...?
MAMA, WHO MIGHT THIS BE?
AHH...
IS SHE ONE OF THE WAR ORPHANS FANG-YU ADOPTED?
WAS HER DAUGHTER ..
LET ME INTRODUCE YOU, THIS IS...

SU-CHAN...
SU...
AH-SHAN ...?
SFX thump
...
AH-SHAN!
...
YOU REMEM-BERED ...!? KAORI!

... KAORI ?

YES
FEELING BETTER SHANIN?

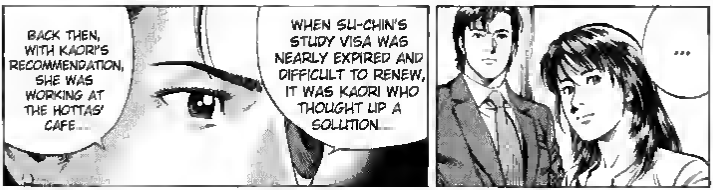
MS. YANG... WHAT'S MAMA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THESE THREE . ?
...
THE BRIDE AND THE HOTTAS...
FANG-YU.. WHAT'S THIS ABOUT..
KAORI-MAMA KNEW .

SU-CHAN, DIDN'T YOU MENTION , WANTING KAORI TO SEE YOU GETTING MARRIED ..?
KAORI'S HEART— IN THAT GIRL!?
堀田家控室
HOWEVER, MS. YANG OFFERED TO INVITE SHANIN, WHO'S SO MUCH LIKE KAORI'S DAUGHTER, IN HER PLACE
...
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, BECAUSE TO YOU KAORI .. NO, TO ALL OF US, SHE'S A VERY IMPORTANT PERSON
... YES
KAORI'S DAUGHTER...
BUT... IT'S NO LONGER POSSIBLE... IT'S BEEN SEVERAL YEARS SINCE SHE...
...
I WAS TOLD THAT KAORI LIVES ON INSIDE THAT GIRL

FOR A MOMENT... I ALSO FELT KAORI INSIDE HER...
I REALLY DID.
...
THAT GIRL KNOWS MY NICKNAME... THE ONLY ONES THAT CALL ME THAT ARE DAD AND MOM... AND KAORI.
IT FELT AS THOUGH... KAORI'S STILL ALIVE..
SHE WAS ALREADY INDEPENDENT! IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'D HAVE LISTENED HAD I REFUSED... AND I HAD MANY OTHER CHILDREN TO LOOK AFTER...
FIFTEEN! AND YOU LET HER!?
WHEN SU-CHIN WAS FIFTEEN... SHE SAID SHE WANTED TO COME TO JAPAN TO WORK WHILE STUDYING.
SHE DIDN'T WANT TO CAUSE ME ANY MORE TROUBLE, AND IF IT WENT WELL, SHE MUST HAVE THOUGHT SHE COULD SEND SOME MONEY BACK...
SO I ASKED KAORI TO TAKE CARE OF HER FOR ME.

HOW COULD I LEAVE A YOUNG GIRL WITH YOU!?
LIKE I'D MAKE A MOVE ON A 15-YEAR-OLD KID!
YOU TOO! WHAT'VE YOU BEEN HIDING!?
THAT'S THE FIRST I'VE HEARD! THAT KAORI, HIDING SUCH THINGS FROM ME?
IF KAORI HADN'T BEEN THERE, WHO KNOWS WHAT COULD'VE HAPPENED
BUT LIFE IN JAPAN WASN'T AS SMOOTH AS SHE THOUGHT.
...
.. WELL OF COURSE!
.. AND AFTER SOME YEARS?
SFX: thump
I REALLY HAVE KAORI TO THANK... NOT ONLY DID SHE HELP ME OUT, SHE CONSTANTLY SUPPORTED HER FROM AFAR AS WELL.

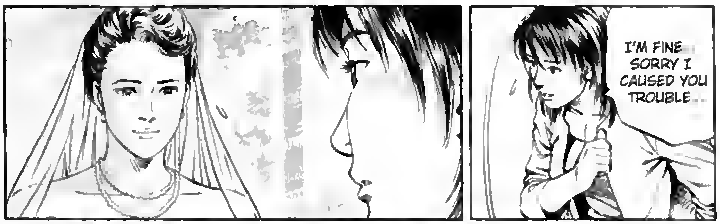
ALWAYS THE REGULAR AT HER WORKPLACE, KEEPING AN EYE ON SU-CHIN... TAKING CARE OF HER THAT WAY...
EVEN CHECKING OUT THE WORK ENVIRONMENT.
FINDING WELL-PAYING JOBS AND INTRODUCING THEM TO HER

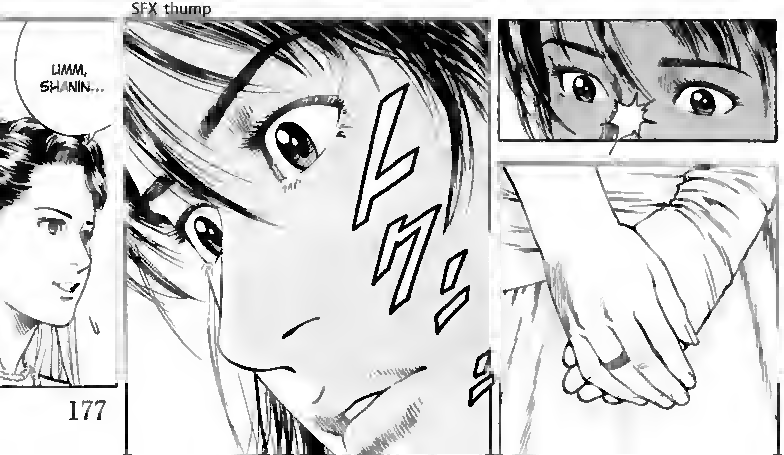

BACK THEN, WITH KAORI'S RECOMMENDATION, SHE WAS WORKING AT THE HOTTAS' CAFE...
WHEN SU-CHIN'S STUDY VISA WAS NEARLY EXPIRED AND DIFFICULT TO RENEW, IT WAS KAORI WHO THOUGHT UP A SOLUTION...
...

SU-CHIN WAS VERY CLOSE TO THEM AS WELL.
KAORI SUGGESTED THAT THE CHILD-LESS COUPLE ADOPT SU-CHIN.
THEY ADMIRED HER DILIGENT WORK ATTITUDE, AND LIKED HER A LOT.

REALLY SOUNDS LIKE KAORI-MAMA...
THAT CHILD'S HAPPINESS WAS ALL THANKS TO KAORI
WITH HER HELP, SU-CHIN MANAGED TO STAY IN JAPAN WITH A HAPPY FAMILY, AND FINISHED COLLEGE.
WHEN SHE WAS TWENTY, THE HOTTAS AND I TOLD HER ABOUT HOW KAORI HAD SUPPORTED HER ALL THESE YEARS.
THAT CHILD KEPT CRYING AND SAYING HOW SHE HAD TO REPAY THAT KINDNESS...
BUT, BEFORE SHE COULD, KAORI...

SFX thump
... HOW ARE YOU FEELING?


I'M FINE... SORRY I CAUSED YOU TROUBLE...
SFX thump


UMM, SHANIN...

SFX thump
SFX thump
SFX. thump
THANK YOU KAORI!
CONGRATU-LATIONS ON ENTERING COLLEGE!

IT WOULDN'T BE ANYTHING EXTRAVAGANT...!
I CAN'T LET A CUSTOMER DO THIS FOR ME...
YOU'RE FINALLY A COLLEGE STUDENT, SU-CHAN! I SHOULD GET YOU SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE!
SORRY ABOUT MAKING IT A HAND-ME-DOWN, BUT TAKE THIS RING
RIGHT!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING! I'M NOT EXACTLY RICH, SO DON'T HOPE FOR TOO MUCH.
UM.. BUT..
I COULD ONLY WEAR IT ON MY PINKY, BUT IT WAS PINCHING MY FINGER. COME, GIMME YOUR HAND.
I GAINED WEIGHT LATELY, AND THIS ALMOST DOESN'T FIT ANYMORE...
EH...
YOU'RE WELCOME, I SHOULD BE THANKING YOU FOR TAKING MY OLD RING.
Y-YES, THANK YOU.
IF YOU'LL HAVE IT
It's kinda embarrassing.
IS IT.. REALLY OKAY?
A COLLEGE STUDENT MUST HAVE SOME JEWELRY!
AH.. A PERFECT FIT!

喫茶
ひだまり
THANK YOU KAORI.
YOU SPECIFICALLY BOUGHT IT FOR HER, IT'S SOMETHING WE SHOULD REALLY HAVE DONE.
AH...!
ACTUALLY, I SAW YOU WALKING OUT OF THE JEWELRY STORE TODAY.
EH...?
DON'T TELL SU-CHAN ABOUT THIS!

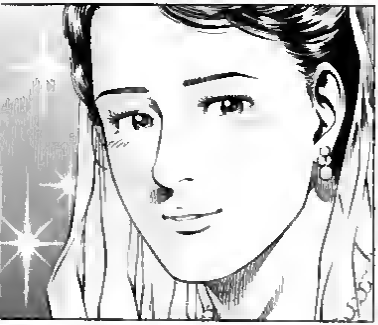
YEAH... IT'S A GOOD MEMENTO FOR THAT CHILD.
UMM... SHANIN ...?
... THE RING...
...
AH-SHAN ...?

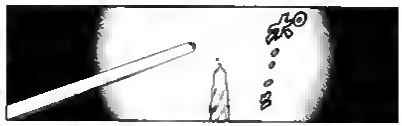
SFX: thump
YOU'RE STILL... WEARING MY OLD RING.
THANKS, SU-CHAN...
SFX: thump
SFX: thump
KA-
KAORI...

I...
I...
KAORI
...
I...

Chapter 198
Christmas Present

PLEASE GIVE A WARM ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR OUR COUPLE.
AND NOW, THE BRIDE AND GROOM WILL LIGHT THE CANDLES ON EVERYONE'S TABLE.
SFX: clap, clap, clap
SFX: clap, clap, clap
SFX: clap, clap, clap
...





SFX: clap, clap, clap

...
SFX clap clap clap
ARE YOU JEALOUS?
KAORI...
PAPA, DID YOU JUST ...?

...?
YAY— THAT WAS A REALLY NICE RECEPTION! YUP, YUP!
burp

GEEZ— PAPA, YOU DRANK TOO MUCH! I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU HERE.
HEHEHE HEHE

YOU CRIED AFTER SEEING THE BRIDE, DIDN'T YOU?
PAPA ...

MAYBE SEEING THE BRIDE MADE YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN I'LL GO OFF AND GET MARRIED?
AH? WHAT NONSENSE ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT?

DON'T WORRY! IT'S STILL WAY TOO EARLY FOR ME... I DON'T HAVE ANY INTEREST IN MARRIAGE...

NOTHING'S CHANGED... THIS PLACE IS THE SAME AS IT USED TO BE..
KAORI LOVED THIS PLACE...
SO SHE'D ALWAYS MAKE US COME HERE FOR A STROLL ON CHRISTMAS.
...
THE BRIDE WAS DAZZLING ...
... PAPA?

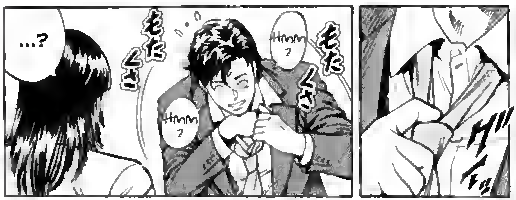
I DIDN'T HAVE THE CHANCE TO LET KAORI WEAR A WEDDING GOWN...
KAORI... SHE PROBABLY WANTED TO WEAR ONE TOO...
SFX thump thump
SFX thump
SFX thump
...
IF I... HAD GRANTED HER WISH EARLIER...

All look the same to me...
SFX: thump, thump
SFX: screetch
SFX: screetch

BUT...
AT THAT TIME, I JUST COULDN'T IMAGINE MYSELF IN A TUXEDO!
PAPA..
I'M SUCH AN IDIOT...
...
JUST IMAGINING MYSELF IN A TUXEDO, ALONGSIDE KAORI IN A WEDDING GOWN, GIVES ME THE GOOSEBUMPS...
IF I COULD'VE SEEN KAORI SMILE LIKE THAT...
THE BRIDE'S SMILE TODAY..

THAT'S ALREADY IMPOSSIBLE...
ON THAT DAY...
...
...RING?
THE RING TOO...
AN ENGAGEMENT RING OF SORTS.
I THOUGHT OF GIVING IT TO HER ON THE DAY SHE WORE THE WEDDING GOWN.
THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE MY FIRST AND FINAL PRESENT TO KAORI...
DIDN'T MAKE IT...
COULDN'T GIVE IT TO HER IN TIME...

PAPA...
THAT'S RIGHT! TODAY'S CHRISTMAS!


...?
もたくも
Hmm?
もたくも
Hmm?

YEA...
I'M SUPPOSED TO GIVE A CHRISTMAS PRESENT TO YOU.

ドゥン…

MERRY CHRISTMAS ... AH-SHAN.
THE ONE MEANT FOR ... KAORI-MAMA!?
PAPA... THIS!
...
A PRESENT FROM ME AND YOUR MOTHER...

SFX. thump
SFX. thump
I'M SO HAPPY...
TO BE RYO-PAPA'S DAUGHTER ...
...

TODAY... I REALIZED THE KINDNESS OF MAMA'S HEART ONCE MORE...
AND KAORI- MAMA'S DAUGHTER ...
I'VE RECEIVED SO MANY GIFTS...
I AM...
SO FOR- TUNATE ...
SO AM I.

...
FOUR
THREE
SO I LOSE AGAIN THIS YEAR...
HA... HA... HAHA ...
?
TWO
ONE
FIVE
... After that sort of ring, how could I give her this.

AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOMETHING IMPORTANT, RYO?
HA! DECEMBER 25 IS NOW OVER.
?
FANG-YU...?
ZERO ...!
YOU FORGOT ABOUT IT THIS YEAR TOO...
RYO.
M-MAIL? DIDN'T I SEND THAT ALREADY...
WHAT HAPPENED TO MY BIRTHDAY MAIL?
THAT ONE DIDN'T COUNT, TODAY'S THE IMPORTANT DAY! NO, I SHOULD SAY YESTERDAY.
HEY AH-SHAN! HOW CAN YOU ESCAPE ALONE
...
W-WAIT... I...
NO EXCUSES!
ANGEL HEART VOL. 18: THE END